This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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TAGS: EWWT ECON PREL PTER PINS CG
SUBJECT: COAST GUARD GIVES DRC PORTS TEMPORARY THUMBS UP

REF: 05 KINSHASA 1039

¶1. (U) The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) has suspended its prior
determination that the DRC's maritime anti-terrorism measures
are inadequate (reftel). The USCG announced in a January 24
Port Security Advisory (PSA) that ships that have visited the
DRC during their last five ports of call no longer face
special USCG-imposed conditions of entry into the U.S.

¶2. (SBU) The DRC initially landed on the USCG's PSA list
because it had failed to demonstrate compliance with the
International Maritime Organization's International Ship and
Port Facility Security (ISPS) code. After Post informed the
GDRC of its placement on this list in May 2005, Congolese
port managers pressed forward with their security plans. Two
USCG officers from their liaison office in Rotterdam toured
the DRC's eight listed international maritime ports with
EconOff in September 2005, and the public and private ports'
progress and commitment to full ISPS code implementation
impressed them. (Note: The USCG recommended that the GDRC
remove one of the ports from its list as it did not appear to
have any international functions. End note.)

¶3. (SBU) As a result of the visit, the USCG determined that
the DRC merited removal from the PSA list of non-compliant
countries, pending final security upgrades and a verification
visit. The USCG told EconOff that it believes that this
provisional finding will serve as a carrot to juxtapose its
PSA "stick." (Note: Although precise statistics are not
available, the USCG estimates that only three to four vessels
per month enter the US after visiting the DRC within their
previous five ports of call. End note.)

¶4. (SBU) In addition to upgrading the DRC to probationary
status, the USCG sent to all public and private maritime port
operators, through EconOff, several suggestions to help the
ports achieve full ISPS compliance. The next step will be an
interim USCG visit to the DRC, perhaps in March, including
site inspections of the ports that have not fully implemented
security provisions. The USCG told EconOff that the purpose
of the visits are to motivate the GDRC to continue its
progress and to provide additional technical advice. The
final step, as mentioned above, will be a verification visit,
an event which will not likely occur until the second half of
the year.

¶5. (SBU) GDRC officials have told EconOff that they are
continuing security upgrades and efforts to obtain all
funding. However, it is not clear that the GDRC will be able
to maintain adequate long-term anti-terrorism measures. Both
a Belgian diplomat and the manager of a port-side business in
Matadi, the DRC's main port, told EconOff that during the
last few weeks, there has been essentially unfettered access
to what should be a controlled port area. Further, ONATRA,
the port authority, now has diminished access to operating
capital as the result of a December 30 presidential decree
that declares that OFIDA, the national customs agency, is the
sole border entry-point revenue collector; ONATRA and other
agencies previously each collected their own revenues. As a
result, ONATRA may either have or claim to have fewer
resources available to finance its ongoing work.

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